DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 128 028 JC 760 464

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TITLE Will There Be a Community College in the Year 2000? Topical Paper No. 5.
INSTITUTION Arizona Univ., Tucson. Coll. of Education.
PUB DATE Sep 76
NOTE 15p.; Topical Paper Series 1976-77

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Organization; College Curriculum; College Teachers; Community Colleges; *Futures (of Society); Governance; *Junior Colleges

ABSTRACT

In the year 2000, there will be approximately 1,400 community colleges in the United States. This estimate is based on extrapolation of the "saturated" models evident in such states as Florida, Washington, California, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, and New York, where a campus is within commuting distance of 90-95% of the state's population. Major changes in organizational form are not anticipated, although the most prominent form will be the local institution founded and organized by a local governing board and receiving some state assistance. Employee bargaining units and professionalization of management will remove the last vestiges of paternalism. Although the economy controls the job market, the community college will continue in the field of adult education and will attempt to effect firmer liaisons with proprietary schools. In terms of curricula, short-term, non-sequential, modular courses will gain ground while credit for experience practices will diminish. The current practice of institutions offering similar programs or duplicating services will persist and become an even greater problem. The job of instruction will depart from the present model and more part-timers, para-professionals, and 40-hour-a-week-do-it-all instructors will have their efforts supplemented by a very few full-time faculty. (JDS)

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WILL THERE BE A COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN THE YEAR 2000?

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Topical Paper No. 5

September, 1976

JC 760 464

WILL THERE BE A COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN THE YEAR 2000?

We worry a lot about the community college at UCLA. My associates at the ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges, Florence Brawer and John Lombardi, and I look at the community college in different ways. John is a former president of a community college, now retired, and he sees the college from an administrator's viewpoint. Florence is a psychologist who sees the institution in terms of its people. My own specialty is curriculum and instruction; I ask the question, "Who's learning what from whom?" Accordingly we question every issue from different perspectives. Our interpretations vary, blend, and integrate. My prognosis for the community college in the year 2000, then, is an amalgam of all our perceptions.

A book of essays entitled The Lives of a Cell by Louis Thomas came out several years ago. Thomas defined three levels of technology in medicine. One he defined as a large body of non-technology which consists of tiding patients over through diseases that are not under control. Here the doctor's time is spent just caring for, or standing by. At the next level of technology is a half-way point in which the physician maintains control over a disease or merely postpones death. Organ transplants fall into this category. Management of heart disease is another example. This level of half-way technology, a sort of taking care of problems, requires a continued expansion of hospital facilities and of trained people. We don't know how to prevent the diseases, but we do know how to

mitigate their effects. The third level of technology that Thomas proposes leads to genuinely decisive actions, actions that make a difference. For example, the cost of immunization for preventive medicine is exceedingly modest in comparison to taking care of the disease after it's already progressed.

Education is not medicine, but there are some parallels. Education, like medicine, is a technology. It includes a corps of professionals ministering to clients. Just as physicians argue over what constitutes the "healthy" person, educators question definitions of the "learned" person. Nearly all professional educators spend their time practicing at the first and second levels of technology. For example, a very sizeable effort in education is expended in just standing by, maintaining custody over the clients. Sometimes it's called babysitting, waiting for the people to grow up and get out from under your care. Another large effort is to remedy defects occasioned by earlier neglect. Every level of school is involved in something called remedial learning, attempting to teach people what they were supposed to have learned at an earlier place. That's the remedy of defects, like heart disease maintenance. The third level of technology? In education it is practically non-existent. We are not about to discover the serum, the immunization, the inoculation against ignorance. We're not about to discover the philosopher's stone that can transmute base ignorance into the gold of knowledge. We maintain custody over, we continually try to remedy the defects. In the next twenty-five years there will be nothing like a breakthrough in knowledge, no serum or other trick for creating learned people. Practically all the education research and

development now is involved with studying and recommending changes in organizing or maintaining the form of the schools. It's research on how to modify school systems, the hospitals of our profession, not on what it would take to create a learned population.

We can anticipate some changes, not occasioned by educational R & D, but by social pressures originating outside the schools. For example, there is a tradition in the United States that a young person goes to school in the neighborhood elementary school. As he gets older he moves to larger schools, progressively further away from home. He goes from the neighborhood elementary school to the middle school that aggregates from a few neighborhoods to the secondary school that is yet larger and takes from a wider region, and eventually to college that takes him out of his home city into perhaps another end of the country. Now that pattern is changing. No longer do we see progressively more distant schooling. Higher education for most students is taking place in the neighborhood. Most community colleges are offering classes in church basements, storefronts, YMCA's, all types of neighborhood locales. Much of what is offered is not like traditional higher education, but it is still based on like certificates and credentials. We may see the pattern of progressively more distant education turned completely around, a reversion to the neighborhood school where a person starts, moves to the middle school and the secondary school, and then moves all the way back into his own neighborhood for his higher education.

As to the question, "How many community colleges are there going to be in the year 2000?", the number will change. We anticipate that the

community college will expand within each state until the number includes a campus within at least commuting distance of nearly everyone, 90-95% of the people within that state. Several states have already reached that level of maturity in community college development: Florida, Washington, California, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, New York. It is easy to predict the number of community colleges in all states using those "saturated" states as the model. Figure the number of community colleges they have in proportion to the population of those states, and project it against the area and population of the United States itself. If the number of colleges throughout the nation expands to a comparable relationship with area and population as is now in Washington, Florida, and California, the United States will top out at 1400 institutions, or about 200 more than now and certainly fewer than many groups are predicting.

That leveling of growth is predicated on two factors. One is that the number of private colleges will continue to shrink, a likely occurrence. The other is that we stick with today's definition of community college, a less likely eventuality. The number of colleges could change drastically on the upper side if we keep re-defining what the community college is, using the term community college to suggest a school organized under state or local control offering the first two years of post-secondary work, plus technical and occupational programs, plus a variety of short courses, modular sequences, and special programs designed for special community groups. The American Association of Community and Junior Colleges Directory prior to 1972 was called the Junior College Directory. From 1972 to 1974 it was called the Community and Junior College Directory, and beginning last

year it has been the Community, Junior and Technical College Directory. If you bring in under the definition the technical college, the strictly occupational training center, then 1400 colleges could easily double. But that's not expansion in type. That's just expansion in definition. There are already that many more technical institutes, and with the major institutional association in America trying to include those other kinds of institutes under the rubric, the numbers go all out of shape. But by using the model of area/population and the comprehensive community college that offers pre-baccalaureate, plus technical, plus the community service center type of activity, the number 1400 should hold.

We don't anticipate much of a change in organizational forms. The colleges now fall into four major organizational types: the private, independent, or church-related college which has been in a no-growth situation for the past fifteen years and which now stands at about 130,000 students and dropping. Another type is the two-year branch campus of the senior institution as found in Kentucky, South Carolina, and several other states That seems not to be expanding much. A third type is the college founded by the local school district and supported locally with some assistance from the state. And the fourth type is the state-level managed college. The local institution founded and organized by a local governing board with some assistance from the state has become the dominant form. We anticipate that by the year 2000 that form will be so prominent that the others will be in the position in which private colleges are now.

Institutional governance will show some modification by the year 2000. Local governing boards will probably still operate much as they do now. But management is where the changes will occur. Management in colleges will probably be even more than it is now a process of accommodation to contending forces. That is, the last vestiges of paternalism will have disappeared. There are still those colleges in small towns where the president is the father-figure and everyone shapes up according to his image. But that will probably be pushed to the side because employee bargaining units will have moved it out. We anticipate an almost total disappearance of paternalism. We look for a major rise in the number and influence of functionaries and bureaucrats who will have taken a place alongside the professional educators because state and federal demands for data and information to be used in cost accounting are going only straight up. When you need to supply data from the local institution to the state and federal agencies, that means administrators, that means bureaucrats, that means functionaries, and any other word you want to apply to people who are not educators but who are institutional managers. The colleges will not be managed by amateurs as they are now. A group of professional managers will have taken their place as a permanent adjunct to the more archaic titles and roles of teacher, counselor, and dean.

A word about the curriculum and product of the community college. The colleges have already taken a lead in the transformation of education from manpower training to lifelong learning. They're in the adult education business all the way. The median age of the community college student in America is now 28. That's up from about 23 five years ago. But more

importantly, in the next twenty-five years the fiction that education can mitigate unemployment will have been exposed for what it is. Educators often talk as though education controlled the job market, claiming that manpower training programs alleviate unemployment. However, between 1972 and 1974, two million people lost their jobs in this country. Did they forget how to work? In 1975, one-half million went back to work. Did they suddenly re-learn their skills? Where is the educational system in all of this? It plays only a small part; much bigger roles are played by other characteristics. The state of the economy controls the job market, not the number of trained people available for work. This was demonstrated dramatically during World War II. Suddenly, after Pearl Harbor, the United States was in the war. This nation needed trained workers for airplane factories, shipyards, and munitions factories. Programs sprang up: four weeks, six weeks, eight weeks, to train people and put them to work. When the need is there, when the jobs are there, when the money is there, the trained people appear like dragon's teeth. Educational institutions don't create jobs; they respond to the market.

The community college will continue to attempt to effect liaison with the proprietary schools. As a contemporary example of the trend, Pasadena City College offers a certificate in cosmetology to people who have done their training at a beauty school a few blocks away. By arranging a contract between that school and the college, the cost of the training has been transferred from the individual student to the taxpayers of the district. The college in turn is giving college certificates to the graduates. Everything else remains the same. The students continue

to go to school down the street; they continue to learn and do their cosmetology in the proprietary college. But because of the contractual arrangement with the district, the taxpayers are now paying for their training, and the students are getting college degrees, a neat arrangement for all concerned. Students benefit, the proprietor benefits, the college benefits because it raises the total number of enrolled students.

Now you know how the community colleges recently have had such great expansion, why their enrollments have gone up so dramatically whereas enrollments in all of higher education have not moved as much. It's less an increase in educational services provided than it is a definitional modification. When the contract between Pasadena City College and Pasadena Beauty College was arranged, the student enrollment in Pasadena City College suddenly became 350 students greater. What happened? A stroke of the pen added that many students to the community college. The educational services provided to the people in the area changed not at all. Look for a greater number of these types of contractual arrangements in the coming years. By the year 2000, I would anticipate that practically all the proprietary school education in some districts will be taking place under these types of arrangements.

Higher education has a precedent for that. One hundred years ago, universities absorbed local architectural ateliers and art institutes and made them part of their professional training programs. Now practically all of the professional training in medicine, business, journalism, art, and architecture takes place in universities. The community colleges are now

in a similar process of absorbing the technological training in their communities.

The college-parallel programs, the so-called transfer programs that are like the first two years of college, may well undergo certain modifications. We anticipate that in order to maintain enrollments, these programs will re-form around flexible, modular, short, current-interest courses. Today, for example, where the humanities are strong, they are centered on courses such as Film Appreciation rather than Study of Literature. And where you find the Study of Literature, it's not the traditional survey course; it's Science Fiction or Literature for Women. It's a special-interest, frequently-less-than-a-semester-long, modular, non-sequential course.

Here's a blurring of lines between education and entertainment. Think of the college that offers a credit course in a traditional area of study, humanities, sciences, social sciences, communications, and think of the other events that take place on the campus, an art exhibit, musical recital, lecture series, colloquium, film series. As the courses get shorter on the one hand and as the college begins offering credit for attendance at the film series, recitals, concerts, or exhibits on the other, the two come together. One is now called community services because the film series is open to the public for a nominal charge. The other is called a credit course because the student must come in, enroll, pay his fees, and attend for a prescribed period of time. But as those courses get shorter and move into association with community entertainment, the lines between the course for credit and the community service,

recreational, or cultural activity begin to blur. The two come together. By the year 2000 that process will have become so pronounced that it will be difficult to discern the differences between a course and a community/recreational or entertainment activity. Colleges that were offering Music History and Appreciation and getting no takers because it was an eighteen-week course for credit, are finding people flocking in to a two-week intensive module called Twentieth Century Sights and Sounds. What's the difference between that and music appreciation? Is it labeling? Packaging? Timing?

A current phenomenon that will not expand is that of awarding credit for experience. At present this is a subterfuge whereby the community college district obtains reimbursement from its state or district funding agency by awarding credit for something that a person has learned or done elsewhere. But by doing so, the community college is in effect surrendering its trump card. Why should someone come to the college at all? Because the United States is and continues to be a credentialed society. People need certificates, degrees, credits. The community college needs average daily attendance in order to get its funding; the body of a person designated as a student because he's registered must be in proximity to the body of a certificated instructor in order for the institution to receive its money. How far can you go with credit for experience? A person comes to the college and says, "I've already traveled and I've already learned; I already know all of those things. Here is the evidence that I know it; give me a certificate. Give me a degree." Suddenly colleges have no basis for funding. What they have done is to surrender the only thing that they

have to offer, a certificate. We're looking for diminution of awarding credit for experience for just that reason.

A word about institutional management. The biggest problem for community colleges in the next twenty-five years will be the matter of sorting out who's supposed to do what for whom. At present the public schools through their adult divisions, the universities through their extension centers, and the community colleges are all offering the same programs to the same clients. In many places this is still gentlemanly, and we don't like to talk about it. But a variety of institutions are all in competition for the same people and the same pile of money. In some places the arguments as to which of these institutional entities is to offer which types of programs in the same area has become rather heated. This is and will become even more so a major institutional-level problem in the coming years. Who's going to offer what and where? Funding is based on people in attendance. Funding runs through institutional channels; it does not run through educational channels. The idea that people will be awarded dollars as individuals to go and spend at the institution of their choice, the so-called voucher plan, is not going to get off the ground. It came up a few years ago and got shot down. Institutions protect their territories. They don't want the money going directly to the public to spend where they want.

The community college has moved away from the fiction that it's governed by its faculty members. In the university the belief that the faculty are in charge is still prevalent. We're slower to learn. Community colleges increasingly in the next decades will be managed by

non-academic institutional managers. This is not necessarily pejorative. I don't mean to put these people in the same category with the bureaucrat or functionary that I mentioned earlier as needed in great numbers to provide the data to the external agencies. But the idea that the faculty run the college is just about out. Those of you who are working as faculty members know what I mean. Good, bad, put your own interpretation on it, it's happening.

The instructor who is no longer involved in governance will be one of many people performing all the tasks other than management. That's the current high school model. The institution will be managed by non-academic personnel. The instructor will go in the classroom, shut the door, and do his thing while all the major decisions that affect his life are happening outside his classroom.

A second type of instructor will be the full-time highly paid program head or laboratory manager working with a corps of hourly-rate instructors, para-professional aides, and laboratory technicians. When I say highly paid, the person who operates as an instructional manager will be earning today's equivalent of $35,000 a year. One highly paid professional person and twenty or thirty others managing an entire program.

A third type will be the 40-hour-a-week do-it-all-yourself instructor in a graded occupational curriculum such as is now seen in regional or area vocational centers. This does not mean that we're expecting to teach twelve hours and are fighting to get nine hours. These are 40-hour-a-week employees. They go in and they open up the shop and they stay there all day. And they're called teachers.

Another type of instructor will be the part-timer who will be employed and dismissed in accordance with the demand for his services. This is the person who is now called the part-time faculty member who has no security of employment, no continuing contract, no rights to his position, and is paid at a rate of somewhere below 40% of the full-time faculty member for doing the same amount of classroom teaching. By the year 2000 there will be districts made up entirely of non-academic institutional managers and part-time hourly rate instructors. The so-called full-time faculty member who is on an annual contract, with job security and tenure, will have disappeared from those places. The entire state of Vermont now has no full-time continuing contract community college instructors.

With that I will stop. I am sorry I have no inspirational message for you, no uplifting upward-and-onward words to offer those of you who have a sincere commitment to the community college. I characterize myself as a full-time dedicated worrier about the institution with which I am closely affiliated.

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